



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

November 5, 2019



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Welcome to Navy History Matters—our weekly compilation of articles, commentaries, and blogs related to history and heritage. Every week we'll gather the top-interest items from a variety of media and social media sources and then link you to related content at NHHC's website ([history.navy.mil](https://www.history.navy.mil)), your authoritative source for Navy history.

★ Wreck of Famed WWII Destroyer USS *Johnston* May Have Been Found

On Oct. 30, the crew of research vessel *Petrel* announced they believe they have found wreckage from the famed [USS *Johnston*](#). *Petrel*'s crew located the wreckage about 20,400 feet below the ocean's surface at the edge of a steep undersea cliff. However, the Navy is not able to confirm it is *Johnston*. "After reviewing the data from Vulcan, we can't say with certainty that the wreckage is USS *Johnston*, but we can confirm it's a Fletcher-class destroyer, either USS *Johnston* or [USS *Hoel*](#), both lost during the [Battle off Samar](#)." *Johnston* and *Hoel* were part of Rear Adm. [Clifton A.F. Sprague](#)'s TG 77.43—call sign "Taffy 3"—tasked with defending north Leyte Gulf, east of Samar, during the landings on the Leyte beachhead. "*Johnston*, under Cmdr. [Ernest Evans](#), was the first one to conduct an attempted torpedo attack on the Japanese force," said NHHC Director [Sam Cox](#). "Evans made the attack without waiting for orders to do so because he knew it was clear that unless he did something, the Japanese were going to run down the slower U.S. force, and they had the power to wipe it out." For more, [read the article](#) at USNI News. NHHC's Frank Thompson was recently onboard *Petrel*. Read about his experience, "[The Search for Kido Butai](#)", at [The Sextant](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-63000/NH-63495.html>

★ First Warrant Officer 1 Grads in Decades Hailed at LDO/CWO Academy

On Nov. 1, the first eight Navy warrant officer 1 (WO1) Sailors graduated from the Limited Duty Officer/Chief Warrant Officer (LDO/CWO) Academy at the Officer Training Command, Newport, RI. The Navy had phased out the rank in 1975, but it was reinstated through the Cyber Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Selection Board due to the increasing threat of cyberwarfare. "Our expertise comes from the enlisted ranks, and we can better assist officers to make those necessary decisions through our experience," said Warrant Officer Ryan C. Snyder, who was among the first eight to graduate. For more, [read the U.S. Navy release](#). For more on the [history of Navy rank: warrant officers, officer corps](#), and [enlisted personnel](#), read the blogs by NHHC historian Nicholas Roland at [The Sextant](#).



Photo Link: <https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2019/11/01/the-history-of-navy-rank-warrant-officers/>

★ Happy Veterans Day

Originally celebrated as Armistice Day to honor [World War I](#) veterans, Veterans Day is observed annually to honor all military veterans and recognize the sacrifices they have made for this country. Today, more than 18 million veterans have proudly worn the cloth of the nation, and Veterans Day provides Americans the opportunity to celebrate and honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of this country, and willingness to serve. For more, check out the [History of Veterans Day](#) infographic. In addition, NHHC's [resources for veterans](#) page provides links to a plethora of information, including guidance for those who are attempting to locate records related to their military service.

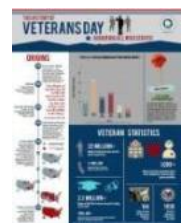


Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/history/history-of-veterans-day.html>

★ Happy Birthday, Marine Corps!

On Nov. 10, 1775, the Continental Congress established two battalions of Marines who would be “able to serve for and during the present war between Great Britain and the colonies, unless dismissed by order of Congress.” After 244 years of partnership with the U.S. Navy, the bond between the two services has never been stronger—from fighting for our country’s independence during the American Revolution to raising the American flag at the Battle for Iwo Jima, “until every battle is won.” The Navy is proud to have the U.S. Marines as a partner, and we wish the Devil Dogs a happy birthday. For more about the Navy and Marine Corps partnership, check out the Navy Marine Corps Team infographic.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/heritage/navy-and-marines.html>

★ Midway and the Submarine Force Today

In May 1942, USS Nautilus departed on her first war patrol of World War II from Pearl Harbor, HI, to search for the Japanese fleet sailing for Midway. During the Battle of Midway, *Nautilus* survived 42 depth charges, several failed torpedo deployments, and was spotted several times by the enemy, forcing her to dive and evade. Despite all the challenges the crew of *Nautilus* faced, their actions were critical to the success of the battle. The U.S. submarine force would go on after Midway to take the fight to the enemy across the Pacific, wreaking havoc on maritime supply routes and ravaging Japanese warships. Submarines made up only two percent of the Navy’s vessels, yet they sank 30 percent of the enemies’ warships and 55 percent of their merchant ships. Although submarines had unparalleled success during WWII, their sacrifice was significant, suffering the highest casualty rates of any naval force during the war. A foundational part of training for submariners today is the study of this legacy of sacrifice and commitment in the face of the enemy. For more, read the blog by Rear Adm. Blake Converse at Navy Live.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/19-n/19-N-20000/19-N-29179.html>

★ How Dorie Miller’s Bravery Helped Fight Bigotry in the Navy

He was not eligible for training or promotion and was relegated to the lowly messman branch tasked with making beds and shining the shoes of officers. Some called them “seagoing bellhops, chambermaids, and dishwashers.” However, on Dec. 7, 1941, while under intense fire, Doris “Dorie” Miller picked up a .50 caliber Browning antiaircraft machine gun and began to fire at incoming Japanese aircraft. He continued until he ran out of ammunition and was ordered to abandon ship. Once the public knew of Miller’s bravery, bills were quickly introduced to the House and Senate to nominate Miller for the Medal of Honor. Ultimately, Miller would not receive the nation’s highest honor, but on May 27, 1942, he became the first African American Sailor to receive the Navy Cross. The acknowledgement of Miller’s heroism sparked change and opportunity for black Sailors. In April 1942, Secretary of the Navy William Franklin Knox announced that black recruits would be trained as gunner’s mates, quartermasters, and a host of other ratings. Almost two years later, on March 17, 1944, the Navy commissioned its first 13 black officers. For more, read the article at the Navy Times.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/us-people/m/miller--doris/80-G-23588.html>

★ USS New York Commissioned Decade Ago

On Nov. 7, 2009, amphibious transport dock ship USS New York was commissioned at New York City. The ship has a remnant of steel from the World Trade Center incorporated into her bow to honor the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. In September 2011, *New York* made her way to NYC for the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Family members of the victims, along with first responders, embarked on the voyage from Norfolk, VA, to NYC, enabling them to participate alongside the crew prior to the anniversary commemoration. In September 2017, *New York* assisted victims of Hurricane Irma in the Florida Keys. While there, Sailors and Marines distributed essential supplies, repaired generators, and restored other critical equipment.



Photo Link: https://www.navy.mil/view_image.asp?id=247886&t=1

★ Future USS *Delaware* Delivered to the Navy

The U.S. Navy accepted delivery of the future USS *Delaware*—the 18th submarine of the *Virginia*-class, Oct. 25. “*Delaware*’s delivery marks the culmination of millions of man-hours of work by thousands of people across this country to bring the world’s foremost undersea asset to the fleet,” said Capt. Christopher Hanson, Virginia-class [submarine](#) program manager. “This next-generation attack submarine provides the Navy with the capabilities required to maintain the nation’s undersea superiority.” *Delaware* is the seventh ship to honor “[The First State](#).” The first *Delaware* served in the [American Revolution](#), the second in the Quasi-War with France, the fourth in the [Civil War](#), and the sixth in [World War I](#). Virginia-class fast [attack submarines](#) are designed for a broad spectrum of open-ocean and littoral missions. *Delaware* is scheduled to be commissioned April 4, 2020. For more, [read the U.S. Navy release](#).



Photo Link: https://www.navy.mil/view_image.asp?id=12327&t=4

★ She Served Her Country During WWII and Just Turned 104

To this day, a lieutenant junior grade who worked in highly classified communications during [World War II](#) as part of the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service ([WAVES](#)) will not talk about what she did during the war—even though she just turned 104, and [Japan surrendered](#) more than 74 years ago. “I can’t tell you anything,” said Elizabeth “Betty” Petrie, raising her hands, smiling, during her birthday celebration at an assisted living center in Bakersfield, CA. At the celebration, members of the military, politicians, reporters, and dozens of her friends were present to thank her for her service. Petrie was born in 1915 and enlisted in the WAVES in 1942. She was scheduled to fly to Washington, DC, with Honor Flight Kern County, but her health would not allow her to attend. Instead, the organization decided to bring the trip to her. “I was completely surprised,” she said. “But pleasantly surprised.” For more, [read the article](#) in the *Bakersfield Californian*.



Photo Link: https://www.bakersfield.com/news/she-served-her-country-during-world-war-ii-and-turned/article_7b2a0892-faa2-11e9-8b98-2fbd1719fd8a.html

★ Jimmy Crotty, one of the Coast Guard’s Greatest WWII Heroes, Finally Home

The first member of the Coast Guard taken prisoner during [World War II](#) has finally come home. Jimmy Crotty, a Buffalo, NY, native, died of diphtheria while being held in the Cabanatuan [prisoner of war](#) camp. He was positively identified using DNA technology by the [POW/MIA Accounting Agency](#) over the summer. “We didn’t expect to see this happen during our lifetimes,” said his niece Peggy Crotty Kelly. Crotty, a leading expert in explosives, left Buffalo on Sept. 2, 1941, for six-months of duty with the Navy in the Philippines. In December, after the [Pearl Harbor attack](#), the Japanese [attacked the Philippines](#). Crotty took shelter in a fortress at Corregidor and began high-risk operations against the Japanese—often in complete darkness. His actions, which became legendary, ended when the Americans surrendered in May 1942. Crotty’s legacy is the sole reason the U.S. Coast Guard has a Philippines Defense Battle Streamer. “He’s a uniquely important individual in U.S. Coast Guard history,” said historian Bill Thiesen. “He is the embodiment of the Coast Guard values: honor, respect, and devotion to duty.” For more, [read the article](#) in *The Buffalo News*.



Photo Link: <https://buffalonews.com/2019/10/27/jimmy-crotty-one-of-coast-guards-greatest-heroes-is-finally-coming-home/>

★ NHHC Webpage of the Week

Since its early beginnings, people who make up the U.S. Navy have always been its greatest strength, and recordkeeping of personnel actions is a vital component of the Navy’s overall mission. To highlight this important undertaking, this week’s webpage of the week is the revamped [personnel](#) page located under [organization and administration](#) on [NHHC’s website](#). On this page are a number of resources, including links to a research guide, personnel strength numbers, selected imagery, and a whole lot more. Check out this page today for your historical research purposes.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/NH-109000/NH-109643.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On Nov. 5, 2007, amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa, with the Marines of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked, sailed on her 14th and final deployment from San Diego, CA. During the ship's tenure, *Tarawa* supported Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, visited four continents, and provided humanitarian relief to people in Bangladesh and Djibouti. In 2007, *Tarawa* was awarded the Battle Efficiency Award for her role in humanitarian assistance efforts following the deadly cyclones that affected Bangladesh. *Tarawa* returned from the Western Pacific deployment in June 2008, and was decommissioned after 32 years of service on March 1, 2009.



For more dates in naval history, including your selected span of dates, see [Year at a Glance](#) at [NHHC's website](#). Be sure to check this page regularly, as content is updated frequently.

Photo Link: <https://www.navy.mil/management/photodb/photos/080109-N-8077G-163.jpg>